UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

E/ECA/RCIWD/OAU/10
Distr: LIMITED
Original: English
10 August 1984

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Regional Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace/ Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development

Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania
8 - 12 October 1984

LC/NAIROBI

WOMEN IN AFRICA TO THE YEAR 2000

Introduction

1. This paper is a preliminary report of the results of an on-going research project on the situation of women in Africa towards the year 2000. \1 The purposes of the project are as follows:

- to alert planners to dangers present for women in Africa if present policies continue

- to develop an action plan to avoid anticipated adverse outcomes of present policies

- to propose a coherent integrated alternative for women's full integration into a new kind of society

2. The current paper is divided into two parts. The first describes the present situation of African women in some of their major areas of involvement, identifying trends and causal factors. Particular attention is devoted to population, food production, water supply, energy, industrialization and education. The second part sets forth the design of alternative scenarios for women in Africa in the context of African development. It is felt that these scenarios offer the possibility for the development of strategies to ensure the integration of women in an African development suited to their needs and those of the region as well.

I. Towards a description of women's situation in Africa

A. The Demographic Dimension

3. Africa has had the highest annual population growth rate (2.9 percent) in the world over the last two decades. It has a young population, with 44 percent under the age of 15 years. The world's lowest life expectancies and the highest rates of child mortality are found in Africa. The present female population of the region is estimated at 237 million, for whom the life expectancy at birth is 50 years.

4. There are slightly more women than men in Africa as a whole, with a female: male ratio of 1.2:1. In the potentially economically-active age range of 15 to 64 years of age there are more women than men in the region. The age distribution of the female population of Africa corresponds to the pattern of other

---

\1 This study is being undertaken by Dr. Patricia Bifani as a consultant to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

developing regions, with a large proportion of the population under the age of 15 and a small proportion over the age of 50. This is the reverse of the pattern of the developing world where the aging population is becoming increasingly large.

5. There are wide variations between the sub-regions in the rates of women's labour force participation, from a low of four percent in north Africa to a high of 32 percent in west Africa (according to ILO estimates). The figures for southern Africa are 19 percent, for eastern Africa, 27 percent and for the middle belt of the region, 30 percent. The highest rates of female labour force participation are in the age group 25 - 44 years, which are also prime years for child bearing. Thus, women's labour force participation immediately raises issues associated with the dual roles of mother and worker.

6. In the distribution of female labour force by age group, the situation of women in Africa also differs from that of the developed world. Large numbers of females who work in Africa are either very young or rather old. Of the total female labour force in Africa, 14.3 percent are in the age group 10 - 14 years; 19 percent are over the age of 45 years.

7. A very positive aspect of women's demographic situation in Africa is that the 44 percent of African women now between the ages of 0 to 15 years have been born in independent nations free from the stigma of colonial domination. Neither have they suffered the abrupt transition of adaptation to new requirements that has marked older generations and radically reversed African women's patterns of livelihood. A young population should be more flexible and innovative in facing the future than the aging population of developed countries.

8. While rural-urban migration patterns in Africa have been predominantly male, it is a trend that is being reduced in recent years. More women are migrating to cities; in some, such as Addis Ababa, the absolute number of female migrants is greater than that of males. Among migrants under the age of 20, there is relative parity between males and females. However, the greater number of male migrants to urban centres means that there are more girls than boys in rural areas and reinforces the difficulties of girls' access to higher education and employment opportunities for which are concentrated in urban areas.

9. Africa has the highest fertility rate in the world, with a total fertility rate per woman of 6.4, compared with 3.8 for the world as a whole, 4.4 for all developing countries and 2.0 in developed countries. There is no evidence of a downward trend in any of the sub-regions; on the contrary, it is either stable or rising. This means that African women average between six to seven live births during their reproductive years. Within Africa, the highest birth rates (crude birth rates of 47.4 per 1000) are found in central Africa. Women in Africa tend to start

bearing children early and continue until the onset of menopause. Although the mean age of first marriage for girls in Africa has been increasing, the majority (44 percent) of African women marry before the age of 20 years. This is the highest rate of young marriage in the world, with the world average being 30 percent; in developed countries the rate of marriage for girls 19 and under is eight percent. In general, family planning programmes have not been widely accepted either at the government or at the individual level in the region.

10. While mortality rates have been falling in most countries of the region, Africa still has the highest average mortality of the world's regions. Crude death rates for the region have been averaging 19.8 per thousand, with rates more than one-quarter higher found in some countries (Upper Volta, Niger, Mali, Guinea Bissau and Ethiopia). The world crude death rate has been estimated at 11.8 per thousand, with that of the developed countries at 9.2 per thousand. On the whole, the lowest mortality rates are found in north Africa and the highest in west Africa. While women's life expectancies in the region average three years longer than those of men, women in developed countries tend to live 29 years longer than women in Africa! Even with falling mortality rates, it is projected that by the year 2000 there will still be a 17-year gap in life expectancy between women living in developed countries and women in Africa. On the positive side, this means that there is tremendous potential for increasing the life expectancy of women in Africa and their participation at world level. Many factors are at work in this regard. For instance, health programmes to eradicate waterborne diseases to which women are particularly prone will certainly extend their life expectancy.

11. Infant mortality rates in Africa are also the highest in the world. An average of 140 infant deaths per 1000 births occur in Africa, compared to the world average of 100 per 1000 and the developed world average of 22. Ironically, given the worldwide premium placed on the birth of boys, infant girls tend to be hardier than boys, with substantially lower mortality rates. The highest infant mortality rates for the region are found in middle Africa and the lowest in southern Africa.

B. Agriculture and Food Production

12. Over the last two decades Africa as a whole has undergone a drastic deterioration in agricultural production, increasing its dependency on food imports and placing a heavy burden on foreign currency earnings. Population growth has outstripped increases in food production by nearly 2 to 1 in this period, with declines in average food production per person and falls below nutritional requirements in average dietary standards. This phenomenon has resulted from severe drought, poor soil, negative price policies for agricultural products, decrease in demand for African agricultural products and poor allocation of resources for agricultural development. Commodity

export-oriented strategies have favoured cash crops to the detriment of food crops.

13. As is well known, agriculture in the region relies on the female labour force, operating largely in the traditional sector, with low productivity, lack of access to resources, including land, capital, technology and training. All of this hampers improvements in food production. Consequently, agricultural productivity can not be improved without improving the capabilities of female agricultural workers, including their access to scientific and technological advances. Such improvements would result in raising the quality of life in rural areas as well.

14. While large numbers of women also work in agriculture in Asia, the concentration of women in agriculture is highest in Africa. Nevertheless there are variations among African sub-regions. Women in Africa south of the Sahara, particularly in the eastern and middle areas, are more heavily involved in agriculture than those from the north. However, the statistics from the north may be faulty since they do not count women's seasonal contributions to weeding and harvesting.

15. As a percentage of women workers, the rate of women working in agriculture is more than 90 percent in Kenya, Madagascar, Uganda and Tanzania; in Rwanda, Chad, the Central African Republic and Cameroon, women in agriculture account for 96 percent of women workers.

16. Criticism has been wide regarding statistics about women's participation and performance in agriculture in Africa, and in developing countries as a whole. Within the United Nations and its agencies, major efforts are presently underway to improve this situation, notably attempts to develop and gather data utilizing improved indicators of women's agricultural labour force participation. These should be complemented by indicators of women's access to inputs such as energy and technology and output indicators related to yields and by-products. These indicators and other measures indicate disparities between men and women farmers in access to resources for agricultural production and in women's management capacity in terms of skills, know how, access to technology and to energy resources. These elements are at the very root of rural women's present low agricultural productivity. They are at the heart of strategies to improve the participation of women in agriculture, and consequently, in development.

17. While the overall importance of female labour in agriculture in the region is high, it tends to be lower in intensive agricultural systems which are equated with modern technology and oriented to the maximization of productivity per unit of inputs. Women farmers have little access to credit needed to gain access to the other inputs associated with intensive agriculture, including ploughs, irrigation, fertilizers

and pesticides and improved seeds. These innovations tend to penetrate first and gain widespread use in the cultivation of cash crops and in export-oriented activities where male farmers have predominated. However, another ramification of such practices is the decreasing need for labour. This is a negative repercussion in Africa where a large percentage of the population depends on agricultural jobs and where alternate employment is growing very slowly. Thus, increased agricultural productivity can also result in increased rural unemployment, increased urban migration and major social problems.

18. Mechanization has a particularly negative impact on women in agriculture in Africa. Mechanization tends to replace human labour, generally female labour, since the new employment created by mechanization usually goes to men. Expansion of cash crops utilizing mechanized methods frequently requires more land, - the more desirable land, - than non-mechanized agriculture, pushing women food producers to less fertile and marginal land, thus further decreasing their productivity. When traditional food crops become cash crops (as was the case with rice-growing in Gambia), women farmers tend to be displaced by men growing the same crops. When technology is introduced to agriculture, it must be done carefully, measuring its social as well as its economic impact.

C. Women and Water Supply

19. Access to fresh, safe water is a major problem, especially in the rural areas, where only 19 percent of the population has access to safe water within a reasonable distance. In many countries of the region, less than 5 percent of the rural populace has access to safe water. As the gatherers and major users of water, this affects African women deeply. Access to water varies greatly throughout the world; the fact that African women are at the low end in the size of their share of the world's water explains, in part, their limited capacity to transform the natural environment. This, combined with their lack of access to energy and to agricultural inputs, means that they suffer a chronic lack of all those inputs which make development possible. Given this extremely difficult situation, their behaviour becomes more adaptive than creative.

20. It is well known that women in Africa may spend upwards of six hours a day in hauling water. This obviously detracts from their ability to engage in many other activities, and, for young girls, from their attendance at school. Poor quality of water, and sanitation as a result, poses serious threats to health and life.

21. Little improvement is expected in the situation of access to water in Africa through the end of the century. Population growth will far outstrip available supplies, with the situation being particularly bad in the rural areas. This has major ramifications for the lives of masses of women in the rural

areas, who will have to travel longer distances to fetch water and cope with the health problems of their families caused by bad sanitation and poor quality water.

D. Women and Energy

22. Energy is a sine qua non of development. A high level of agricultural or industrial productivity can be attained by a community only when it is able to harness energy equal to many times the total muscular capability of its members. Yet, the developing countries' share of energy resources continues to be very small compared to their population. With three-fourths of the world's population, developing countries account for only one fourth of the energy used. The bulk of Africa's energy comes from fuelwood, which provides the only household fuel for the bulk of rural families. Worldwide fuelwood use is closely associated with poverty - the poorest countries use the most fuelwood.

23. Women in Africa are the major gatherers and users of fuelwood, needed for their multiple transformation activities. In addition to fuelwood, they use other low-grade energy sources, including charcoal, crop residues and animal dung. Only rarely do they have access to fossil or other fuels or to any technologies for energy conversion. Energy restriction means restriction in efficiency and in the range of activities to be performed.

24. The access to a limited number and/or type of energy sources, normally of the lowest grade, reduces the range of activities women can perform and the degree and extent of the transformation processes they can undertake. It also reduces the efficiency of the process and makes great demands on women's own effort and energy. At the same time energy constraints constitute an obstacle to rural development, since every economic process depends on an adequate supply of energy. The low grade energy conversion provided by fuelwood, charcoal and other direct burning of biomass is adequate mainly for activities related to the maintenance of daily life. Efforts to go beyond the maintenance level and generate a sustained development process require the widest range of energy resources, matched to the tasks to be performed, according to the development needs of each area and community.

25. At present these resources are not available to rural women in Africa. This fact confines them to "survival" or maintenance activities, rather than incorporating them into a development process. That is, they lack the elements and the time to overcome their own condition. Their daily toil is oriented to sustaining their level of existence.

26. A woman's access to energy in rural areas is limited by the amount of time and personal energy she can devote to its collection and the type of fuel available in her environment. The rural woman generally has access to non-commercial energy sources through direct appropriation on an individual basis. This dependency on fuelwood, largely from non-commercial sources, makes daily life very insecure. Almost all the fuels on which rural women rely are highly vulnerable to environmental constraints, notably drought and desertification. Particularly in the Sahel, rural women are facing an acute energy crisis. The fact that rural women in this, and other areas, have not shared in development to the extent of having disposable income means that they must continue to rely on non-commercial sources of fuel which are becoming increasingly scarce and of poor quality, rather than purchasing this through the market, or sharing in common energy supplies.

27. This pattern of livelihood generates its own dynamism, in which the scarcity of resources bring pressures on the environment and the environment reacts with more scarcity. This is the current situation of some 26 countries in Africa, and the situation will become worse with greater pressures on rural women's already tangential existence unless major changes occur.

28. The difficulties rural women face in gathering fuel are compounded by their inefficient use of energy, with small resultant energy yields. Most fuel for cooking and heating is burned in open fires, in which as much as 95 percent of the energy generated is lost to the atmosphere. Given the inefficiency of energy conversion, the amount of wood consumed is high, and women must journey frequently and carry heavy loads to satisfy their families' need for fuel. As firewood shortages grow more acute, children are needed to assist their mothers in fuel collection; this frequently results in population growth as well, as the mother produces more children to ensure help in energy provision. An area where simple technology could have major social and environmental impact is in improved stoves for rural women. To date, little attention has been given to this area in comparison with the introduction of new technologies directed towards cash crop farming.

E. Women's Participation in Industrialization

29. Despite rapid growth of the sector over the last two decades, Africa's industrial production lags beyond that of other developing regions. Within Africa, industrial development is concentrated in a few countries. Industrial production contributes more than 15 percent of GDP in Egypt, Algeria, Swaziland, Mauritius, Ivory Coast, Kenya and Zimbabwe. North Africa is the most heavily industrialized sub-region, followed by West Africa. Four countries (Egypt, Nigeria, Algeria and Morocco) make up more than half of the region's industrial production.

32. Despite major industrial growth in the region over the last 15 years, the number of women workers in the sector has not increased proportionately. In 15 countries, the number of industrial women workers has increased by less than 5,000 in nine other countries, by less than 25,000. Only six countries of the region have more than 50,000 women industrial workers: Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Upper Volta and Zaire.

33. In some countries of the region, the number of women workers as a percentage of the industrial labour force is minuscule. In 17 countries, women make up less than 5 percent of the industrial labour force. On the other hand, in Mali and Upper Volta, there are more women than men working in factories (46 percent of the industrial labour force). Women comprise between 30 and 40 percent of the industrial labour force in Benin, Ethiopia, Libya, Togo and Tunisia.

34. The sectoral distribution of the female labour force in Africa shows 5.1 percent employed in industry, in contrast to 63.1 percent in agriculture and 19.9 in services. The 5.1 percent is the lowest percentage at world level. Low agricultural growth over the last two decades has also affected women's industrial employment, since the subsector they are most likely to enter is food manufacture. The pattern of Latin America and Asia, where large numbers of women workers are employed in labour-intensive industries such as electronics, has not occurred in the Africa region.

35. Women's situation in the industrial development of the region varies widely according to the industrial pattern adopted and to policies concerning women. The most industrialized countries of the region, including Algeria, Nigeria and Zimbabwe, are based on heavy industry, a subsector that largely excludes women. Cultural patterns also contribute to the low level of women's industrial employment in North Africa. The employment of women is heavier in agro-industries, assembly industries, textile and garment manufacture. In Morocco and Ethiopia, more than half of textile workers are women.

36. In agro-based industry, the employment of women varies according to export orientation (processing of plantation crops) vs. home-consumption oriented (food processing, especially fish, fruit and vegetable processing). As in agriculture, men predominate in the cash-crop derived industries. However, there are wide variations in this pattern. In Cameroon, for instance, women are 33 percent of the labour force involved in palm oil production. In some countries, more than 90 percent of the workers in food canning industries are women.

37. Export-oriented industries aimed at the international market tend to employ fewer women in Africa than in other regions. In order to compete internationally, they must adopt capital-intensive technology. The workers needed are skilled or

[illegible] areas where can develop as a result of the education patterns of the region. The condition does not exist for women.

39. In the case of industrialization oriented to the domestic market industrialization has women workers participate. Here the goods manufactured generally originate in the industrialized world where the technology also comes. The industries are generally import-substitution utilizing unskilled labour that reproduces male employment. In both these industrial patterns industrial female labour is employed at the lowest pay and more unskilled levels.

40. As a result of the low overall level of industrialization in the African region, the male labour force is competing with female candidates in these industrial sectors that in other regions (Asia, Latin America) the industrialized countries) have traditionally employed large numbers of women workers. The access male labour usually is seeking work in such industries as textiles, garments, leather goods, food and beverages, and cigarettes traditionally open to female participation. This fact prevents a major incorporation of women in industrial activities.

41. While on the one hand industrialization creates opportunities for women to participate in modern sector development, on the other hand it is pushing women workers into less mechanized, less skilled and therefore lower paid jobs as technological innovation substitutes male for female workers.

F. Education

39. While the majority of the population of Africa aged 25 and over has a low level of educational attainment, the expansion of education in Africa from 1960-1980 has been enormous, surpassing that of all other regions. While starting from a low base, the enrolment of girls in African primary school during this period increased 4.2 times over the prior two decades as compared to 2.9 times for boys; the enrolment of girls at secondary level increased 10.9 times, as compared to 8.5 times for boys. In the southern African countries of Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland, the enrolment level is higher for girls than for boys.

40. Still, illiteracy rates are higher for women, and for rural peoples as a whole, and the disparity between male and female illiteracy has increased over the last decade. In this area, however, UNESCO predicts that the gap will decrease during the next decade. Of women aged 15 and over in Africa in 1980, 72.8 percent were illiterate. Of men from the same age range, 49 percent were illiterate.

41. While the number and percentage of female students is increasing at all levels, the gaps between percentage enrolment

of male and female students are largest at secondary and post-secondary levels. Girls comprise 44 percent of students in the Africa region at the first level, 39 percent at the second level and 27 percent at the third level. UNESCO predictions indicate that girls will probably achieve parity with boys in the region in enrolment for ages 6 - 11 years by the year 2000; however, for the age groups 12 - 17 years and 18 - 23 years, the disparity between the sexes will increase. This reflects a higher drop-out rate, largely as a result of social pressures, for girls than for boys.

42. While vocational education has not been keeping pace with the growth of academic education in the region as a whole, the percentage enrolment of girls in vocational education has increased since 1970. However, girls tend to concentrate in home economics. They are few even in commercial education and health-related programmes, fields in which girls predominate in developed countries. Lately the encouraging trend of growing enrolment of girls in agricultural programmes has emerged.

G. Projections from Present Trends

43. From the situation of women in Africa at the present time described above, a number of trends can be extrapolated to describe their situation in the year 2000. Using medium growth rate estimates, there will be 474 million women in the region at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Many of them will be moving to the urban areas, as by the end of the first decade of the new century 45 percent of Africa's population will live in urban areas. For urban women in Africa, over-urbanization together with the polarization of industrial activities will accentuate their unemployment and underemployment.

44. If present trends continue, it appears that women will have little chance to increase their share of industrial employment or to accede to administrative and managerial occupations. Given predictions for worsening climatic and socioeconomic conditions in the rural/subsistence sector, competition will increase for scarce opportunities in the formal wage structure. Technological transfer will continue to displace women from their traditional activities while favouring men in newly-created employment opportunities as a result of their generally greater training and specialization. All these trends will force women into the "informal sector," where it is likely that women will have a marginal place among the already marginalized.

45. Barring major changes in their situation, women in the informal sector will concentrate on petty trading and domestic

service, in contrast to men in the same sector who may undertake transformation processes and create small industries (e.g. furniture making, metal working). Urban overcrowding, lack of sanitation and poor housing conditions will increase the spread of disease and force women into prostitution and other forms of delinquency. If urban conditions do not improve, the majority of urban dwellers will live in conditions of squalor.

46. In the year 2000 per capita income will continue to be low and unevenly distributed. At present the richest one-fifth of the population of Africa have an income four times that of the poorest 40 percent. Rural-urban disparities in income will continue and increase. While per capita income figures disaggregated by sex do not appear to be available for the region, one can assume that women's share will continue to be low.

47. In the rural sector, unless incomes of rural women increase, they will not be able to have access to inputs they need to improve their food crop yields. FAO estimates that Africa will only be 56 percent self sufficient in cereals, the major food item of the region, by the year 2000. It is projected that the number of seriously undernourished people in Africa will increase to 127 million in the year 2000.

48. The overall diagnosis of the situation of women in Africa in terms of the quality of life, working and living conditions, health, nutrition and education seems to be catastrophic for themselves, their children and the region as a whole.

H. Outcomes of Dependent Development

49. The present situation is the consequence of a certain form of management of African resources and potentialities, characterized by the position of Africa as a dependent and colonized system in the international division of labour. Two decades after independence, many aspects of this situation are still perpetuated. Africa is still excessively dependent on other countries for manufactured products, technology, skilled manpower and even food. Trade structures still operate largely in a North-South direction, a legacy from the past which fosters unequal exchange and its consequences, including deteriorating terms of trade, outward-oriented production, and little domestic processing of raw materials. \2

50. The result to date has been dependent development. It has been well characterized by ECA Executive Secretary Adebayo Adedeji:

\2 Organization of African Unity/International Institute of Labour Studies. What Kind of Africa by the Year 2000? (Geneva, 1979).

> [This development . . .] puts us into a straitjacket of producing what we do not consume and of consuming what we do not produce, makes us exporters of raw materials at low and, in most cases, declining prices in order to import semi-finished and finished products at high and rising prices
> products at high and rising prices \3

51. This adopted pattern of development has had a negative impact on the condition of African women, reversing the whole fabric of their economic, social, cultural and personal life. Some of the major consequences have involved evolution of the traditional economic and social system from its communitarian basis to private systems of land tenure and production which have eroded women's traditional roles and strengthened male domination of the means of production. With an outward-oriented agrarian structure, women's food production was displaced to accommodate the predominant cash crop cultivation. Agricultural assistance was directed to this sector to the neglect of food crops. At times the dominance of crop cropping pushed women off the land in search of wage labour. The infrastructure was lacking to cover their traditional domestic responsibilities when they were forced to enter the paid labour force. When men migrated to towns, mines and plantations, women's responsibilities at home increased; less help was available from children when they began to attend school. Women had to assume major burdens without assistance from technology or other inputs. Overwork, poor nutrition for themselves and their families and declines in the family quality of life became the norm.

52. While privatization of the means of production accentuated economic and social differences among group, and some women became endowed with resources, information and power, the majority struggled for survival in marginal urban areas or in rural or isolated desertic regions. Not only are their working and living environments poor and precarious, but their access to new resources is minimal or near impossible. Unfortunately, this category of women are the majority in Africa. If trends continue along the present path, their situation could become unbearable.

53. Less-favoured women are not only deprived of the access to economic resources, they are most frequently relegated to the harshest ecological regions or man-made environments. The situation of women in the Sahel or in over-populated urban peripheries are illustrative of this. The lives of poor women are strongly affected by differentials in sub-regional natural resource distribution, since they do not have to means to secure other than natural resources.

\3 Adebayo Adedeji, The Evolution of the Monrovia Strategy and the Lagos Plan of Action: A Regional Approach to Economic Decolonization. (Addis Ababa, 1983).

54. As a result of these disparities in income, environment, and access to resources, different patterns of living have evolved. Some are purely oriented to survival, at the minimal level which permits the maintenance and reproduction of life. Others are on the path to development, with the capacity to improve the economic, nutritional, educational, and sanitary situation of themselves and their families. The vital task for the future is to get as many African women as possible from the former situation into the latter.

55. The specificity of women's situation assumes a more definite shape when sex discrimination is added to their already difficult development problems. Sex discrimination affects different spheres of daily life, defining a whole set of women's obligations and restricting the social and economic realms she may enter. Women see their access restricted to development resources and to decision-making levels. This marginalization moves in a vicious circle, since marginalization itself usually prevents the awareness of the situation and the consolidation of strategies to overcome it.

II. Scenarios for the Future

I. The Possibility of a Different Future

> "It is not sufficient to outline the successes and failures of the past. The history that mankind makes can and must be used to avoid pitfalls and to map out a better future."
>
> Adebayo Adedeji, Introduction to ECA and Africa's Development, 1983-2008. (Addis Ababa: 1983).

56. This negative view of the future of women in Africa, and of the region as a whole, is not irreversible. Other futures are possible. As African Governments, decision makers and scholars stated at the Symposium on Future Development Prospects of Africa Towards the Year 2000, "the only way of avoiding the disasters that loom at the turn of the century is to foster a new political will . . . a new human-being oriented African development policy can evolve in which the continent can find its own identify and status instead of having them imposed on it." \4

57. This new political will means to use African resources for African development and to implement a long-term strategy aiming at self-sustained development and economic growth, based on collective self reliance and aimed at improving the standards of living of the mass of the African people and reducing mass

---

\4 OAU/ILS, What Kind of Africa by the Year 2000?

unemployment. According to the Lagos Plan, full mobilization and effective utilization of Africa's labour force, - men, women, and youth - for national development and social progress should be a major instrument of development. Within this strategy, African women have a decisive role to play.

58. The future situation of women in Africa will depend to a large extent on the capacity of the system to integrate African women more effectively into the development efforts of their respective countries. This is a wide objective which can be accomplished through many different development strategies. The selection and assessment of alternative strategies requires a major analytic and synthetic effort in order to conceive of the possible effects of the strategies adopted. By using model scenarios, scholars and policy makers can imagine possible futures, in order to minimize risks in taking decisions.

59. In the scenarios that follow, an attempt has been made to consider women's issues as inextricably linked to the situation of the region, its social systems and historical situation, taking into account the different levels of determinations affecting women's situations.

60. The interaction between the various dimensions of women's lives (environmental, economic, social and psycho-social, cultural and demographic) and the levels of analysis (international, regional, sub-regional, national, community), but particularly between the international and regional levels, defines a development pattern. The insertion of Africa into the international system characterizes the development pattern which the Executive Secretary of the ECA terms " a colonial and neo-colonial economic strategy." The Monrovia Strategy and the Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Decolonization of Africa provide an alternative to this former commodity-export based strategy. Goals and policies included in one or another development option, together with strategies specifically oriented towards women, will define the situations of African women by the year 2000.

J. Scenarios for the Future

61. A set of three scenarios follow, in order to explore some of the possible futures for African women by the year 2000, comparing different and sometimes contrasting alternatives.

62. The first set of scenarios has been built emphasizing the development process as such. The evolution of African society along one or another development path is seen as having a major impact on women's situation. The structure and dynamism of the adopted pattern of development is considered at the very root of women's performance, participation and benefits from the development process.

63. A second set of scenarios focus on policies and measures oriented specifically to women's situation. Basic factors causing inequality are related to the division of labour among the sexes and to the tendencies rooted in traditional and cultural values that restrict women to the domestic sphere. A major emphasis is given to institutional inequalities between the status of women and that of men. Policies are mainly oriented to solve sex discrimination problems with a given development pattern.

64. The third focus is on an integrated approach, including both a reorientation of the development process and specific policies addressed to women.

65. The assumptions resulting from the adoption of one or the other points of view are the following:

a. Development-oriented Assumptions

The situation of woman in Africa in the year 2000 will depend to a major extent on the orientation adopted by the region as a while. That is, women's situation will continue to be dependent on the dynamics and orientation of the Africa region in the international, regional and sub-regional context. The adopted African pattern of development will set a life style and will define a strategy for the use of and access to African resources which will have important consequences for women's performance and quality of life.

b. Women-oriented Assumptions

The situation of woman in Africa in the year 2000 will depend to a major extent on policies and strategies specifically oriented to improve women's condition and to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. It will depend also on women's own initiative in organizing themselves and fighting for their own rights.

c. Integrated Assumptions

The situation of woman in Africa in the year 2000 will depend on a comprehensive and integrated strategy in which women's rights and duties are conditioned neither by sex nor by elitism. A global self-reliant development process would increase the availability, quality and variety of existent resources, while at the same time non-sexist policies would make possible an equalitarian access to and control of these resources.

66. Each of the three scenarios (S1, S2, S3) has three variants. The first scenario in each set is based on development-oriented assumptions. The first variant in each set (S1 Variant A, S2 Variant A, S3 Variant A) makes no special provision for the situation of women. The second variant in each

set (S1 Variant B, S2 Variant B, S3 Variant B) assumes that explicit plans and programmes have been addressed to women under the prevailing development orientation.

S1:_A_dependent_development_for_Africa

67. The African region will continue to evolve along the lines of the present export oriented strategy with all the economic, social, cultural and environmental consequences this implies. Major problems will exacerbate under external pressures, such as lack of financial resources, balance of payment difficulties, deteriorating terms of trade, growing protectionism in developed countries, scientific and technological dependence and recession in the industrialized countries. The fall of the external demand for African export commodities will deeply affect imports essential to the development process. The whole pattern will negatively affect the quality of life of the masses of the African population who will be ill-prepared to compete or even to survive within this highly competitive structure. Even basic needs will not be satisfied. The orientation of the productive system to the requirements and needs of an external market will continue to aggravate internal supply, particularly in terms of food production, thus affecting the nutrition and health of the population. Indiscriminate transfer of technology and patterns of industrial development typical of more industrialized societies will aggravate employment problems. Basic infrastructure including roads, ports, transport and others will continue to service export needs instead of serving the integrative and trade needs of the African population. Environmental deterioration will reach a critical point, harassed, among other things, by people's need to find their supplies (fuel and food) in their immediate surroundings due to their difficult or impossible access to marketed goods. The use of technologies and the demand for a certain type of production will contribute to this detrimental process of environmental deterioration.

68. The lag in the achievement of decent conditions of life for the majority of the African population will continue to be associated with high death rates and high birth rates.

69. This dependent pattern of development would exacerbate present negative effects on women at all levels . Deprived of certain basic resources and discriminated against in their access to and management of the existing resources, women's efforts towards a full integration into society would continue. Science, sophisticated technology, education, and employment would continue to be barriers against women's development. Foreign ideologies and interpretative patterns will conceal some basic problems of African women and stress less relevant difficulties, thus misdirecting solutions.

S1_Variant_A:___Lack_of_policies_oriented_towards_women within_a_dependent_development_pattern

70. Within this general framework no specific measures are taken to integrate women into this evolving process. Women are mainly receptors of the effects of this dependent pattern of development and should adapt to it and suffer its impact. The impact adopts the form of foreign penetration, affecting economic and social systems and marking life styles and patterns of consumption.

71. Particularly negative effects may result from the transformations in the agrarian setting, increasingly adapted to the requirements of the external demand for certain crops. This orientation of agricultural production is detrimental to food production for domestic consumption, an activity traditionally handled by women. Exports crops absorb the best and most productive resources, such as land, water, working capacity, modern technology and know how, scientific knowledge and skills. They also have priority influence on imported inputs like fertilizers and pesticides. Food production for domestic consumption has a secondary role, and women's performance, a secondary status. No effective policies are designed to improve women's performance in food production or to alleviate their other time-consuming tasks such as water fetching and firewood collection. This fact, together with adverse terms of trade for agricultural products, brings hardships beyond human levels. One subsistence possibility is for women to become wage labourers in the export-oriented sector or in agro-industry, usually at wages lower than those of men, working instability and lack of minimal legislated benefits. Others migrate to urban areas in search of better alternatives. This choice is not a solution either. A dependent and highly concentrated industrial activity, intensive in capital inputs, and weak as a generator of employment, leaves women virtually outside the formal sector. Their skills do not allow them to compete with men for scarce employment opportunities. Confined to the "informal" sector, women continue to deal with the less innovative and less rewarding types of work: petty trading and domestic service, or a combination of different survival activities, of which prostitution, exacerbated by tourism, constitutes a too frequent option.

72. Exacerbations of dependency and colonial domination can be even more onerous, adding to women's toils racial discrimination with its whole system of comprehensive dehumanization.

51. Variant B: Women's integration into a dependent development pattern

73. Different types of measures are taken in order to integrate women into this export-oriented development process. These measures are to a large extent generated outside the region and conceived within a paternalist structure. Women are oriented towards the models and life styles of the industrialized society, but they are provided with neither the skills nor the means to

fit into this pattern. Therefore the transition is fragmentary, and provokes and stresses social differentiation. A myriad of small projects are promoted, and arbitrarily implemented with some particular groups or individuals, deliberately forgetting the others. These projects, usually small, are geared from outside and usually refer to a particular need without adopting systemic or integrative endeavours, and never aim at any structural change. Women's capacities in these projects are always at a semi-skilled level and most of the time require continuous foreign support and advice. Generally they are oriented to provide support at a bare survival level (e.g., to provide water to some selected groups in a dry area) or to improve modest and non-innovative skills, never competitive enough within the system. The conception of development orienting these projects is fragmentary. Development is conceived as an addition of development projects, without consideration for the generation of an endogenous dynamism able to spread and institutionalize achievements. Development involving basic structural changes in an integrated and planned manner is never envisaged. High stress is put on sex discrimination and in the dissemination of Western stereotypes about sex confrontation. The problem of the "status of women" assumes a crucial dimension disregarding some very basic issues such as the material support of this status in terms of rights, availability of resources, at least of the minimal ones, and of access and management capability regarding the existing means of subsistence.

74. In general these measures and strategies are additional instruments to maintain dependency and to open markets for foreign products and ideology.

3.2.2 A gradual move from a dependent development pattern towards a more autonomous one?

75. The African region starts a gradual change along the lines of the Monrovia Strategy and the Lagos Plan of Action. This slow move co-exists with the previous export-oriented pattern, showing different levels of integration. Society typically appears as transitional, sharing elements of both systems to a greater degree than in the preceding scenarios. Culture and values are fragmented and this fragmentation involves a loss of previous traditional cultural patterns while the new ones are not totally internalized. The outside system continues to have rights and proposes directives and orientations to the region which at the same time follows its own initiatives and looks for its own path. Nevertheless, external factors, such as the high cost of imported energy, mounting external debts, and deteriorating terms of trade converge with drought and harsh environmental conditions to make difficult the transition toward deeper structural changes.

76. In this gradual process women stay at the very confluence of different sets of demands. Deprived of some former

benefits and protection traditionally provided by the former system, their access to new resources and developments is fragmentary and incomplete; so are their skills to compete in an increasingly competitive world. This uncertain position between two or more intermixed patterns of livelihood affects women's capacity to deal with the socioeconomic system in a comprehensive and coherent way, benefiting from what is already available and taking decisions regarding the wider society.

52. Variant A: Lack of scarcity of policies oriented to women within a transitional development pattern

77. Women are left to themselves to adapt to sometimes contradictory requirements. Media and other agents of socialization spread certain images of women, images which are beyond reach for the majority and bring fragmented consciousness and frustration. Spontaneous endogenous development efforts remain localized without sufficient strength to overcome adverse living conditions. Organizational capacities alleviate, to a greater or lesser extent, daily hardships, such as child care problems, sudden disease, or small investment needs. Nevertheless, it is not an organizational ability to give to majorities some representation or decisional power in the wider sphere of social and economic life.

53. Variant B: Deliberate efforts to integrate women in a transitional development model

78. Governments, decision makers, planners and women themselves take some steps to improve and/or create women's spheres of participation. Nevertheless these efforts are hampered by the lack of coherence of the system as a whole and the continuous and increasing process of socio-economic differentiation. This process means that development efforts are fragmentary and driven by different sets of motivations, some stemming from the ruling groups and others from well-intentioned donors. Some women's organizational capacity is stimulated and/or co-ordinated by the institutional system and some few women's representatives reach a decisional stage in the society. Grassroot movements are allowed at local level and stimulated towards some minor income-generating activities New "liberation" images spread at different levels and with different efficacy, helping women to attain economic independence, going from business and entrepreneurial women at high levels of economic rewards, to small petty traders or craftswomen earning meagre incomes. These types of solutions usually alleviate sex imbalances in one way or another since they tend to promote women's self-reliance. However, since they do not address themselves to alleviate imbalances due to structural socio-economic differences in society, achievements remain partial and without the self-sustained capacity needed to solve collective detrimental situations. Resource allocation and control remain precarious and insufficient for the vast majorities and major policy efforts tend primarily to solve sex differences within the framework of scarcity and deprivation.

3.1. A self-reliant and self-sustained development for Africa

The African region starts a process of integrated and comprehensive structural change along the lines recommended by the Monrovia Strategy (1979) and the Lagos Plan of Action (1980) aiming at the economic decolonization of Africa. This move is endorsed by the Heads of State and Governments of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). A fact that provides institutional support to plans and programmes. It also provides an integrative will to stress African solidarity and cooperation in the different domains and particularly in the economic sphere.

79. This development strategy identifies some major dynamic foci for African development and economic growth, namely self-sufficiency in food production and supply, and a sub-regional and regional internally-located and diversified industrial development. It also stresses integrative support structures (transport and communications), development of indigenous capabilities and resources, of domestic markets and an effort at physical integration in order to facilitate social and economic intercourse.

80. The social axis of this long-term process is increasing participation by the mass of the people in the production and consumption of the social product and a democratization of the development process.

3.2. Variant A: Not enough measures and policies are implemented to improve women's participation in the development process

81. In spite of the Lagos Plans intention to mobilize the entire human and material resources of the Region, the consideration of the female contribution at all development levels is not fully specified. This fact perpetuates a piecemeal approach to women's problems, avoiding an integral planning or women's performance overall and at each development domain. The lack of integral planning can perpetuate old, sexist patterns of division of labour and access to resources and make difficult structural changes. It can also prevent or limit women's immersion in the most dynamic development processes or keep them aside from innovation and creativeness. That is, it may be a process that improves situations, but it does not change them radically.

82. Finally, the lack of specificity and explicitness of women's participation makes difficult the assessment of progresses and lags. Without explicit goals, the step-by step movement through different decision-making points loses coherence and strength, and fails in a cross-capitalization of development inputs. At the same time it makes difficult the incorporation of unexpected achievements into a global development plan.

5.1 Variant B: Coordinated and integrated measures are taken in order to ensure women's full participation and benefits from a self-sustained and self-reliant development process

83. Within the frame of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Decolonization of Africa and the Lagos Plan of Action, integrated and comprehensive plans are proposed for women's full participation in the development process. These plans refer to all the development areas considered in the Lagos Plan of Action, including food and agriculture, industry, natural resources, human resources development and utilization, science and technology, transport and communications, trade and finance, energy, and technical co-operation. This broad integrative goal aims to enlarge the field of women's participation to the whole spectrum of development possibilities and, at the same time, to endow women at all levels of the socio-economic structure with the tools skills, power and knowleige to handle and manipulate development strategies. While the Lagos Strategy will increase the availability, quality and diversity of basic resources, an integrated strategy specifically oriented to women's advancement will identify main targets and desired goals, important turning points in the decision making process and will define a time frame in which main targets are to be achieved. It will also set monitoring bodies, preferably of mixed background in terms of situation and resources, able to identify different ranges of problems and improvements. Apart from this it will establish consultative bodies, linked to the policy and plan ing structure, able to provide a continuous flux of both integrative and innovative suggestions to the planning process. This consulting body should be flexible enough to apprehend the appearance of unexpected changes and to include them within the planned strategy.

84. This integrative approach assumes a mutual interdependence between the socioeconomic system and the actors, beneficiaries, or victims of development policies, in which the system adapts to the requirements of the majority and the actors orient their behaviour and strategies to dynamize the system towards the achievements of the desired goals. In this process of mutual interdependence, women are expected to play a priority role as dynamizing agents, generating policies and evaluating achievements and constraints.

85. This approach will also stress the participation of the most backward (in terms of their rights and possibilities of improvements) members of the system, who will have equitable representation in consultative and monitoring bodies, and as well as direct participation in the decision-making structure. Community organizations will back such participation, and will provide a continuous flux of information from the grass root level. This participatory emphasis follows the directives of the Lagos Pan of Action and the Monrovia Strategy, whose pivotal axes are increasing participation of the mass of people and democratization of the development process aiming at self-reliance and self-sustainment.

86. In this process women will have an equal role, both in terms of sex and of class representation. Existing African structures will play a significant role as supporting development structures at grassroots level. In this scenario to these existing structures would be restructured in terms of sex composition, thus allowing a more balanced share in problem identification and decision making. The abilities of those exercising their organizational capacity for the first time should be stressed and re-inforced.

87. The scenarios and their variants are represented schematically and summarized in the following diagram:

ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS FOR THE YEAR 2000

Development Trends

Women's Trends	Scenario 1 Export-Oriented Development	Scenario 2 Transitional Development	Scenario 3 Self-reliant and Self-sustained Development
No explicit plans or programmes addressed to women	S1 Variant A Lack of policies oriented at integrating women within a dependent development pattern	S2 Variant A Slow move to a different development pattern. No plans to palliate conflicting social demands	S3 Variant A Structural change towards self-reliant development. Women's participation is not planned on integral basis
Explicit plans and programmes addressed to women	S1 Variant B Partial and fragmentary projects, geared from outside oriented to integrate women within a dependent development	S2 Variant B Improvement of women's spheres of participation remains fragmentary within a context of low economic growth.	S3 Variant B Participatory and democratic programmes are launched to equalize women's condition within a self-reliant development.

88. From the above, the elements of successful forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women in Africa beyond the end of the United Nations Decade for Women can be easily deduced. Firstly, actions that simple deal with women's situation divorced from the rest of society have minimal impact. Measures that deal with the situation of women, but that are integrated into export-oriented or transitional development patterns will also fall short of the goal of preventing the picture of women in Africa in the year 2000 that the continuation of present trends paints. The only genuine possibility of a better future for the majority of women in the region will come in the the context of a self-reliance and self-sustained development where women fully participate in all structures and decisions of the society. These are the implications for the future of women in Africa to the year 2000 that are derived from the Lagos Plan and the Monrovia Strategy.

89. The achievement of the goals of the Monrovia Strategy and the Lagos Plan, - that is, the reorientation of African economies and societies and the implementation of an alternate development process will depend to a large extent on the behaviour and directives of the actors involved in the process. These actors belong to different settings and social strata. Some already exist. These include the ECA and its African Training and Research Centre for Women, the Organization for African Unity, Governments of the region and their machineries for the integration of women, non-governmental organizations, aid agencies, and community leaders and organizations. Others need to be created to make possible the advent of desired futures for African women. These might include consultative groups on women's issues at all levels of the social structure, institutional machinery, and of the financial and political system; coordinating entities; monitoring organs for women's advancement in development programmes; intercommunitarian coordinating organisms; women's labour organizations; and emergency action-oriented women's groups to monitor areas or groups at risk and collaborate in coordinating and implementing emergency policies at all levels of the social structure. Some of these should provide the means to implement already existing policies; others need reorientation of their aims and policy guidelines to women and the advancement of disadvantaged women.

90. To imagine alternatives for the future is not enough. It is necessary to adopt a plan in order to orient the present towards what is seen as a better future. Images of the future can be effective only if they are related to public policy making. These alternatives for the future have been presented in order to guide this meeting in the elaboration of strategies that will make a transition from their imperfect present to a better future for the women of the Africa region.